

Christianity and Crisis

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A More Excellent Way

THERE was trouble in the little Christian congregation at Corinth nineteen hundred years ago. These newly-made Christians were not succeeding in getting along together. Since they were his children in the faith, Paul wrote them about it. He told them much concerning the meaning of their religion. He explained to them that in any community there must be diversity of function just as there is in the body. But whatever else may help you to solve your difficulties, he said, I remind you of a more excellent way than all, the way of love, the supreme gift of God. Love is always understanding, always patient, always seeking the good of others. And we may add to Paul's words that another new Testament writer was to tell us that love is supreme because God is love.

Now that love of which Paul wrote, the subject of myriad sermons, the most exalted and the most neglected gift of God, puts a heavy burden upon Christians today. It assumes the unity of the family of God and that the problems of human society lie ultimately in personal relationships. It implies that a stable society must be built not on force but on goodwill; that exclusion, "excommunication", or acceptance of conflict as normal is self-defeating and that infinite patience is essential.

Love is a heavy burden, for we live in the world, we cannot escape it; and for all the sincerity of our faith it is far too easy to be swept along with the crowd. It is far too easy to forget the priorities. In the clash of interests, in the urgency of propaganda, and in the stream of conflicting reports about what is going on in the world it is hard to keep one's head. The community troubles which beset us today are not those of a little congregation. They are world troubles, and national troubles; but they all arise ultimately in the relationship of persons. They all pose the same old question of which Paul wrote, how are we to get along together?

That general question finds at the moment its most searching and most complex focus in the relations of the western democracies with Russia. Is the cold war a pattern of the future? Is the world to be always on the brink of the hot war, always building its defenses, always anxious, suspicious and unable with whole-hearted joy to turn to constructive creative life-giving work? Or is the hot war inevitable and the world to be plunged into a seething pit of misery and suffering beyond human descrip-

tion? It is a question of human relations. Our witch-hunting hysteria, to take an illustration nearer home, but part of the same problem (Russia), raises many minor questions but in the end it is the same thing. Here are people who differ acutely, definitely; how are they to get along together? And the Christian answer is always clear on one point: Whatever else you do, into whatever by-paths you stray, whatever particular and specific conclusions or policies you reach, love lies at the beginning and love is the end of your search.

We cannot cherish the hope that the governments of the world will suddenly become Christian. Nor has this journal ever accepted the view that along that main highway of love there must be no resistance to evil other than moral protest. It has never questioned but that physical force is constantly necessary in the struggle with the evil forces of the world. But to say that the enforcement of law is necessary for a stable social order is quite different from saying it is the foundation of that order. To say that, in the present state of the world and before the United Nations is equipped to cope with international anarchy, military power cannot be ignored is quite a different matter from the mindset into which the American people are being slowly led, a mindset which contradicts the implications of love at the start.

For it is impossible to look at the American scene and not realize that we are coming to think that the cold war is inevitable, that force alone really counts, and that the hot war must come some day. We think of our chief security task not as the unceasing effort to find a peaceful solution, but in terms of armaments and defensive alliances. The Atlantic Pact grows to be more important than the Marshall Plan. The latter is vast and fundamental. But when it comes to the thing which counts, we forget what is fundamental—and why should we not? Five billions for the E.R.P., and fifteen billions for armament with more when the Atlantic Pact is signed! The ominous words of the Lord meet us: "Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also."

Every day brings reports of new weapons, of new defense projects. Every peace move is assessed on the basis of strategy. Israel and Egypt approach peace and we ask what that does to Russian policy in the Near East? The questions concerning the fate of Japan begin to turn, not on the welfare of the

Japanese people, but on defense against Russia. Influential voices urge that we forget, in the interests of strategy, what Franco has done and is doing to our democratic ideals which, we ought to remember, constitute our only real ground for world leadership.

Our churches corporately plead for good will, for patience, and understanding, but the church has not escaped the contagion. Think of the torrent of violent speech released by the Mindszenty case. Certainly what sounded like a call to the hot war came from at least one high-placed pulpit. Few Americans would defend the methods or the probable motive of these religious trials. But Christian love insists that we keep our heads.

"We are in danger," said Vera Micheles Dean recently, "of allowing the hostility and resentment aroused by the Kremlin to distort our view of the rest of the world." She might have said "to shift our view from the real problem." We must live with Russia. War is mass suicide. Even our victory would only further the appeal of communism in what might be left of civilization.

We must find a way to a stable world order, and

ultimately to a world government. We must envision as Sumner Welles says, "the long range objectives as well as the short." The long range objectives all focus in the United Nations and that means, again, finding a way to get along with Russia.

So back comes the humble Christian and ventures, in the din of war preparations, in the hysteria of witch hunts, in a fear-ridden nation, to suggest that fear won't bring us what we want, nor vast military preparations, nor defense alliances. To be firm is not to be tough nor to be silly like the recent little episode in Frankfurt. To be reasonable does not mean surrendering our democratic faith. To respond courteously even to a very dubious Kremlin offer is not sacrificing prestige. Courtesy is seldom misplaced. We need the ancient Christian message. We need to start again on that more excellent way. It will not bring us all to the same conclusions in policy; but it will keep first things first. It will quiet fear. It will strengthen faith. It will help to open the only path to a stable world. Our primary task is not defense against Russia but the discovery of a way to get along with Russia.

E. L. P.

Cult or Crusade?

CHARLES W. RANSON

The Crisis of the Ecumenical Movement

IT has been well said (in the second volume of the Amsterdam Assembly Series) that: "the problem of the church's world mission is the crisis of the ecumenical movement. If an ecumenical movement is not primarily a strategy of world-wide evangelism, then it is nothing but an interesting academic exercise." (p. 116)

Those who witnessed the formation of the World Council of Churches at Amsterdam last summer were conscious that they were sharing in an historic moment. But the Kingdom of God cometh not with observation, and the place which Amsterdam will ultimately hold in history will depend upon the response of the churches to that essentially missionary challenge which was brought to sharp focus in some of the Assembly sessions and given explicit expression both in the findings and the "message" of the Assembly.

If the ecumenical movement is to become "primarily a strategy of world-wide evangelism," it can obviously only do so by taking full account of history (including the history of ecclesiastical division) and making effective use of the churches' existing organs of world-wide witness. The decision of the World Council to enter into "association with" the International Missionary Council was not one of the most sensational events of the Assembly. It was not, however, the least important. This association will gain its real significance as these two ecumenical bodies

seek together to see the church's mission in its universal dimensions and to confront the whole church with the challenge of that mission.

The Contemporary Missionary Challenge

"Familiarity is the opiate of the imagination," and we are in danger of being drugged into insensibility by the frequent repetition of the two basic facts which form the core of the contemporary missionary challenge.

The first is stated in the familiar cliché that we live in one world. For as long as most of us can remember we have been hearing speeches and reading essays on the unification of mankind. For at least a quarter of a century this theme has been the stock-in-trade of the lecturer on international relations and the missionary pamphleteer. Yet, as Arnold Toynbee has recently remarked, the outlook of most Westerners on history remains stubbornly "pre-da Gaman."

The other great new fact of our time was referred to by William Temple in his enthronement sermon at Canterbury. In a memorable passage, which has since become one of the most-quoted Christian utterances of recent years, Temple emphasized the fact that the Christian church is today a world community.

These two facts—the technological unification of the world, the spatial expansion of the church—are the result of historical processes which have, like parallel lines, run side by side but never met.

It is true, of course, that for some two centuries after Vasco da Gama made his way to India round the Cape of Good Hope, the spread of Western civilization and the propagation of "Western" Christianity were generally regarded as part of the same process. But as Toynbee points out in *Civilization on Trial*, about the turn of the 17th and 18th Centuries, something happened which will "loom out in retrospect as one of the epoch-making events of our modern Western history." This momentous "something" was the gradual exclusion of religion from the process of Western cultural expansion. "This 17th Century turning in the road of Western progress," says Toynbee, "was big with consequences; for the Western civilization that has since run like wildfire round the world has not been the whole of the seamless web; it has been a flare of cotton waste: a technological selvage with the religious centerpiece torn out."

This utility pattern of Western civilization has proved astonishingly easy to assimilate. It has won such conquests in every part of the world that it has become the instrument of the apparently irrevocable unification of the human race. Yet such unity as mankind has achieved is merely technological and "man cannot live by technology alone." Herein lies the tragedy of modern man and the relevance of the ecumenical church and the missionary enterprise which is both its parent and its instrument.

The modern missionary movement was the child of Continental Pietism and the Evangelical Revival. It gathered increasing momentum throughout the 19th Century. It carried the Gospel to almost every country in the world and extended the Christian church to the ends of the earth. For centuries Christians have sung, in the words of *Te Deum laudamus*: "The holy church throughout all the world doth acknowledge Thee." But until our time those words have been an aspiration and a hope. Today they are a statement of fact.

It would be a gross distortion of history to suggest that the whole modern missionary movement developed without any awareness of the parallel historical process which resulted in the expansion of secular Western influence all over the world. Missionaries have probably been much more sharply aware of the fact and the implications of this expansion than most people. There has, however, been lamentable failure on the part of the church, as a whole, to see the nature of the issues involved, to sense the true relevance of the church's growing universality, and to interpret the tremendous challenge of historical events. There has also been an almost total blindness on the other side, to the meaning of the missionary enterprise and its significance. The average contemporary historian (Toynbee is a notable exception) simply ignores the modern expansion of the church. Professor John Foster of Glasgow University has illustrated this by reference to the *Cambridge Modern History*. The index to this twelve-volume standard work has one entry under the word "missionary": *Missionary Ridge, fighting at 1863!* Such total disregard of a development which

resulted in the world-wide establishment of the church is, as Foster rightly protests, a falsification of history. The myopia of the secular historian on this point is, perhaps, one result of that 17th Century "turning in the road of Western progress" which led to the tacit assumption that religion is not for export. But we can hardly, in fairness, charge the historian with willful blindness on a point which the church itself has so largely failed to see or to make clear to the world. The church must first cast the beam out of its own eye. The task of world evangelism has too often been regarded by the main body of the church as a marginal interest, with the result that this primary Christian obligation has tended to be the cult of a minority. The supreme test (or crisis) of the ecumenical movement will be its ability to present the missionary task of the church as a universal obligation—a crusade which is the concern of the whole fellowship of the faithful.

The essence of the contemporary challenge to world evangelism lies in the fact that we appear to have reached a point in history at which the two parallel historical movements—which have achieved the unification of the world and the universal extension of the church—now meet in world-wide encounter. To state the missionary obligation solely in these terms would be an over-simplification amounting to distortion. The Christian evangel is addressed to living men, in all their infinite variety of condition and of need; and the Christian task cannot be defined in terms of "historical processes." Yet it is within the broad historical context of a unified world and an ecumenical church that a world-wide strategy of evangelism must be wrought out today.

The Menace of an Ecumenical Mythology

The danger of writing in such general terms as have been here employed is not only that we may distort the picture by over-simplification, but that we may delude ourselves that people can be moved by large words which lack content. In the backwash of the popular propaganda which made Amsterdam headline news, fragments of ecumenical mythology are already floating around. One is the assumption that the real ecumenical job is done in great world gatherings. Such gatherings have, of course, a very important part to play in ecumenical life. Amsterdam was in itself a very notable achievement, without which we should not have a World Council of Churches. But no one knows better than those who are responsible for running big world gatherings that they represent only a stage in a process. It is when the ecumenical becomes local that it begins to be real and to reach down into the life of the worshipping community which is the church. The most urgent and imperative task now confronting us in the ecumenical movement is to help local Christian communities to "think ecumenically" and to see the ecumenical movement as "a world-wide strategy of evangelism." In some places a hopeful beginning has been made. In the small town in which I live the clergy of the four local churches, on a recent

Sunday, called their congregations together for the united discussion of the meaning of Amsterdam. An afternoon conference—in which each of the four ministers outlined one of the volumes in the Amsterdam series—was followed by an evening meeting in which a discription of the Assembly and an interpretation of its significance was followed by questions and discussion. The most encouraging feature of this effort was the obvious determination of clergy and laity alike to learn the meaning of "ecumenicity" for the life of their own local community. "Ecumenical thinking is that which is not merely aware of the revolution in the state of the Christian church brought about by its spatial extension in the 19th and 20th Centuries, but also takes seriously the Gospel as that act of God which cannot be understood except as His proclamation of salvation for the whole world, and as that word of God which awaits for its final interpretation, the contributions to be made by all the nations of the world as they are gathered into the one fellowship of the world-wide church of Christ." (*The Church's Witness to God's Design*, p. 116.) The kind of local effort described above has very real value as a means of education; but it may easily result in a sense of frustration unless it helps people to see how, within their own local Christian fellowships, they can be partners in the total ecumenical task. This cannot be done merely by exhorting them to engage in local evangelism, or social activity, or in the study of "findings" on *Man's Disorder and God's Design* and their application in their own religious and social setting. The average church member learns most readily to "think ecumenically" and to achieve a sense of active partnership in the ecumenical church through sharing in the organized missionary activity of the church.

The mythological illusion that the organized missionary enterprise has reached its term and is now a kind of pious anachronism already has some currency. It will be a disaster for the ecumenical movement if it gains ground in the churches. The missionary task is not at an end. It is only at its beginning. The history of the last one hundred and fifty years is but a preparation for and a prelude to an even mightier undertaking. The world-wide establishment of the church has been achieved, but the evangelistic task, in many lands, has only begun. The real meeting between the Christian faith and contemporary systems of thought and life lies in the future. The whole church must be faced with the challenge of that encounter on a world front. In addressing itself to this task the ecumenical movement will become "a strategy of world-wide evangelism." If it fails to do so, it will become merely a cult of the *elite*, which will be unable to make a potent impact upon either the church or the world.

The Conversion of the Church

The task must begin with the conversion of the church. The Holy Spirit is not bound and cannot be commanded. He alone is the Lord and giver of life. The renewal of the church and the recovery of its sense of apostolic obligation can only come by

the gift of the Holy Ghost. The one thing that mortal men can do is to prepare in the desert a highway for our God. We cannot doubt that, what God hath wrought in the evolution of the ecumenical movement, is an essential part of the process of preparation. We have today more effective instruments than at any time since the Reformation for communication with the church and between the churches. We must now learn how to use these instruments, in effective coordination, to confront the church with its primary missionary obligation.

The recent Foreign missions advance campaign, sponsored by the Foreign Missions Conference of North America, offers an interesting example of what can be done in coordinated ecumenical planning and combined action in this task. After years of careful consultation (through denominational and ecumenical channels) with younger churches throughout the world, a clearly articulated program of missionary advance, adapted to the varying needs of different countries and areas, was evolved. The task of presenting this program to the churches of North America was then faced. It was begun in a large assembly, convened in Columbus, Ohio, last October. Over two thousand delegates from the cooperating churches, all of them carefully chosen leaders drawn from every part of the country, were brought together for several days. Under the general theme "One World in Christ," the challenge to world evangelism was presented in a program which was a skillful blending of general analysis with concrete plans for advance.

This was followed by a series of regional conferences in 36 cities of the United States and Canada. These regional conferences set a new pattern of ecumenical cooperation. They were so planned as to provide that each cooperating denominational agency should hold a simultaneous convention, using its own local and national machinery to present the case for missionary advance to its own people, in terms of its own denominational plans (already worked out in relation to the general advance plan) and of the united program. These denominational meetings then merged in a large central meeting in which an attempt was made to present the total ecumenical task. In the organization of the united meetings, the local councils of churches, in most cases, bore a major part.

The success of the regional meetings varied considerably. But, at least, they demonstrated one thing: that where an effective combined effort is made to confront the church with the missionary and ecumenical challenge, the churches are ready to listen. Many said: "We never heard it in this wise"; which is, perhaps, not surprising in view of the fact that it is (I am told) 23 years since a large interdenominational missionary conference similar to the Columbus meeting has been held in North America.

If the church is to learn the nature of its ecumenical obligation, it must be told of the urgency of the contemporary missionary challenge. We cannot afford to wait another 23 years to mobilize our Christian resources for world-evangelism.

Historical Note on the First Amendment

We print herewith a memorandum from two students of the School of Law of Columbia University, written for Professor Dowling, on the historical background of the First Amendment. The memorandum seems to us important because it reveals that the historical purpose of the particular phrasing of the Amendment was to prevent Congressional interference in the regulation of religion by states, even including a possible establishment of religion within a state. This is a far cry from the present thesis that the Founding Fathers intended to establish an "absolute wall of separation" between church and state not only within the nation but in the states.

Two points were made in the Supreme Court decision on the case of *McCullum vs. Board of Education*. The first was that the Fourteenth Amendment made applicable against the States the establishment clause of the First Amendment, and the second was that the establishment clause forbade the giving of aid to any or all religions. This memorandum deals with the first point. While we are inclined to accept the meaning of the establishment clause expressed in the dissent, we do not argue here against the decision *qua* decision. Our purpose is to show that the historical materials do not provide satisfactory evidence to justify the application of the establishment clause to the States by way of the Fourteenth Amendment.

In his first draft of the amendments to the Constitution, Madison specified limitations on both the federal and the state governments. Congress was forbidden to establish a national religion or to violate equal rights of conscience. Only the latter limitation was to be imposed on the States. Virginia history shows that Madison was unalterably opposed to state establishments. At the time of the proposal of the amendments, however, five of the thirteen States had establishments — Connecticut, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, and South Carolina. It would seem then that practical problems of ratification had persuaded Madison not to propose that his personal views be made constitutional doctrine. Even the limitations on the States that he did propose failed of Congressional approval, however, proving that Madison had certainly not underestimated the determination of the States to protect their local religious arrangements.

This determination is further indicated by the changes in language in the proposed forms of the amendment limiting the national government and in its finally adopted wording. The fourth proposal read: "Congress shall make no law *establishing* religion . . ." That language bars a national establishment but does not give specific protection to state establishments. The final phrasing, "Congress shall make no law *respecting an establishment of religion*", provides a bar not only to a national establishment but also to any Congressional interference with state establishments. This construction brings the clause into consonance with the reality of state

arrangements and with Madison's calculations. The phrase would not be idiomatic if it were read only to prohibit a federal establishment and not to protect the state establishments. However, if it is read to bar Congressional curtailment of state establishments as well as a bar to Congressional establishment, it is terse, precise, and something of a linguistic triumph.

These facts show that one of the intended effects of the establishment clause was to protect from Congressional interference the state establishments of religion which existed in 1789. There is then, an inherent contradiction in saying that the framers of the Fourteenth Amendment intended to carry over against the States a provision which was designed to protect the States in the very conduct that is now forbidden them. This is not the extension of a protection, it is the repeal of language that had been purposely framed to protect the States.

Of the two familiar techniques for ascertaining the effect of the Fourteenth Amendment, the first requires an inquiry as to whether the protection sought to be included is of "the very essence of a scheme of ordered liberty." To say that to give any aid to all religions without discrimination is inconsistent with a scheme of ordered liberty is to adopt an unprecedented view of liberty and to belie current sociological fact, (cf. England and Sweden).

The second approach is well expounded by Mr. Justice Black in his classic dissent in the *Adamson* case. He assembles there comprehensive historical data in an attempt to show that the Fourteenth Amendment embodies all of the first eight amendments. Analysis of the historical facts does not satisfy that the clause was in any way incorporated in the Fourteenth Amendment. The appendix to Mr. Justice Black's dissent discloses that almost every provision of the Bill of Rights was mentioned in the Congressional Debates as being made applicable against the States by the Fourteenth Amendment. Singularly unmentioned was the protection against an establishment of religion. The provisions that were mentioned guaranteed personal rights. The framers of the Fourteenth Amendment wished to insure to everyone his basic *individual* rights. The failure to mention the establishment clause shows that there was no intention to destroy the *State's* right to establish religion and to enforce the clause against the States is to negate it.

The Supreme Court appears to have been led into this error through uncritical acceptance of certain previous formularized statements regarding the application of the First Amendment to the States via the Fourteenth. They rely on cases where the other clauses of the First Amendment, which guarantee personal rights, were so applied. It was not unnatural to associate the establishment clause with these personal protections—not unnatural, but, for the reasons indicated, not correct. A formula should not be repeated to undo the calculated effect of con-

stitutional terminology. It does not seem to us that any of the opinions in the cases presents a satisfactory explanation for making this particular clause applicable against the States. Our view is that the constitutional path chosen to reach this result violates the historical facts.

Harmon H. Ashley
James Q. Riordan

Correspondence

Sir:

I have always looked to *Christianity and Crisis* for opinions based on the broad principles of Charity towards all and malice towards none. It was, therefore, a great shock to find such an editorial as that entitled "Perils to America in the New Jewish State" in your issue of February 21st. . . .

To begin with, it overlooks the fact that a national state became a practical necessity for the Jews as the only solution to the problems of caring for the immense number of Jews made homeless, first by Hitler's persecutions and massacres, next by the British refusal to admit them to Palestine while it was under their mandate, third by the refusal of the United States to admit them in sufficient numbers to really alleviate the situation. It is for these pitiable refugees that I wish to express my sympathy, and to those who are so generously helping them my admiration.

To say that Jews have driven thousands of Moslems from their homes is untrue, although it is the common opinion in this country. The Arabs who left their homes in Palestine left *before hostilities began*. They were persuaded to leave by Arab leaders who intended to attack the entirely peaceful Jewish population in defiance of a decision made by the United Nations. In some cases the Arab peasants asked the Jewish forces to take possession of their villages, trusting to their friendly neighbors for protection, rather than the invading Arabs. Many remained in Palestine peacefully tilling their fields during the whole Arab-Israel War. Except where fighting, forced upon the Jews by the Arabs and British, actually occurred, they were in no danger.

As for the Jews in the United States becoming hyphenated because of the emergence of the state of Israel, why should their state of mind differ from that of the rest of us? We might all be considered hyphenated if our origins were taken into account.

Israel is indeed in a part of the world which is confused and chaotic, but as a genuinely democratic state, giving to all within her borders the rights of free citizens and the benefits of education, showing the states around her the possibilities that lie in the scientific development of their soil, the way will become a pilot experiment, bringing peace and prosperity to the Near East. To attain her objective, however, she needs the wise advice and friendly protection of the United States. Let us not fail her!

Mary Taussig Henderson
Cambridge, Mass.

Sir:

I read the article on the New Jewish State (February 21st) with no little astonishment, since it deviates considerably from the theological perspective which makes *Christianity and Crisis* indispensable even to the Jewish reader.

My amazement is caused by the type of argumentation preferred by the author, not by his political convictions. I agree fully with his rejection of nationalism (he should say, however, nationalism *anywhere* and in *any form*) and with other details in the article. It is less clear to me why he rations his compassion in awarding it to the Arab refugee only but denying it to the universally rejected survivor of the extermination camp.

But the true mystery of the article is its argumentation. Not the question of right or wrong, of selfish or unselfish, or of religious or irreligious is asked in reference to the attitude which one should assume, but the somewhat utilitarian one about the reaction of the environment. It certainly decreased the sympathy which 200,000,000 Fascists had for the United States when she opposed them by force, just as it is detrimental to our popularity with 200,000,000 Communists to have to curb Communism; and as far as the American Jewish citizen is regarded, the reaction of some of his less objective neighbors, who mistake him for a hyphenated and are therefore *less* qualified for determining a moral issue—their reaction can hardly be made the measure of the Jew's personal decisions. Perhaps, it is preferable from a religious point of view, to incur occasional criticism for choosing the cause which one deems just and to follow James Parkes' evaluation in his "The Jewish Problem in the Modern World": "To their honor the citizens of the Mosaic religion of Western Europe and America refused to abandon the unemancipated Jew . . . and thereby allowed themselves to become a target of anti-Semitic attacks" (p. 55).

It is probably the "prudence" of the statesmen, occasionally winning the upper hand over the conscience of the churchmen, which leads to a utilitarian view. . . .

Dr. H. A. Fischel, Rabbi

Lecturer, University of Alabama
Director, B'nai B'rith Hillel Foundation
Tuscaloosa, Alabama

Sir:

As a Christian I felt ashamed of, and as a Protestant I wish to protest against, the article by H. S. C. It seemed to me outrageous in tone and factually untenable. . . .

The Moslem world is a fiction today. Moslem solidarity has faded almost to insignificance. It has almost everywhere been replaced by nationalism. If all goes well within the next five years most of the Moslems of the Middle East will be glad to cooperate with the Israeli and, in addition, will have a respect for them which they did not have before.

Incidentally, it is not true that the Moslem world has ever treated the Jews as a group with kindness. It is not true that the establishment of the State of Israel will increase Jewish nationalism, either in Palestine or in the United States. Quite to the contrary. Once the Irish of Ireland recovered their independence,

they ceased to be fanatical. Once the Irish of Ireland recovered their independence, the Irish of the United States ceased to be hyphenates. . . . It will not be otherwise with the American Jews.

There is no evidence whatsoever that the Israeli will act as imperialists or try to seize the entire Jordan Valley. . . .

Edgar Ansel Mowrer

Washington, D. C.

Sir:

Henry Sloane Coffin's statement has my hearty approval. . . .

John Shade Franklin, Minister

Brooklyn, N. Y.

Sir:

This editorial is hardly in keeping with the high standards of your paper, for one would have to go to the anti-Semitic press to find an article more extravagantly unfair to Israel and all Zionists. . . .

To Dr. Coffin the United Nations decision apparently means nothing, and the Arab invasion of Palestine to upset that decision was a holy war. Not only does he call Jewish Zionists "fanatical" nationalists, but, it would seem, the many thousands of Christian Zionists are also considered insane.

. . . When he says, "For the present we can do nothing but accept the fact of this new nation," does he imply that as soon as forces can be mustered, adequately financed and armed, that he will join in a call for a new war to crush this infant democracy? Is his purpose to arouse hostility in America against Israel and incite anti-Semitism? Since well over 80% of the Jews in the United States are Zionists—in Dr. Coffin's language "hyphenates" or "partially Americanized Americans"—how can his hatred of Zionists fail to stimulate hatred of Jews? Even if we were to accept as fact the accusations Dr. Coffin levels against Israel and Zionists—which I most certainly do not—is his method of dealing with these "errors" consistent with Christian principles?

Rev. Karl Baehr

American Christian Palestine Committee
New York, New York

Sir:

. . . Assuming that, so long as the whole question of Palestine as a homeland for the Jews was under debate such an argument might have been in order, it is difficult to see how it can be considered any less than highly mischievous now that Israel, after negotiating with Egypt, is an established state that has been accorded *de jure* recognition not only by the United States but by many of the other leading nations of the world. If . . . "for the present we can do nothing but accept the fact of this new nation," why not gracefully accept the fact, instead of apparently taking the position that, despite the fact that in Israel we have the newest nation in the world, we must agitate against it, drive a wedge not only between the Arabs and the Jews but between the Zionists and the anti-Zionists, and bring Israel crashing to earth just as soon as we can?

Christianity would make more progress in the world if so many crimes were not committed in its name.

Harold L. Ickes

Washington, D. C.

Sir:

. . . Had Mr. Coffin tried to appraise in a fair manner the tensions through which the Jewish people have been passing, because of the emergence of the Jewish State, he might have made a genuine contribution to our understanding of the current world. But no such thing was attempted. . . . Like countless thousands I have followed the struggle of the Jewish people to establish a homeland on the land so deeply and understandably sacred to them. In many an article I have tried to assess accurately how it came about that the British Government could have allowed itself to make such conflicting promises to Arab and Jew as they did in the First World War. With untold millions I watched the sickening horror of the Nazi slaughter of the Jewish race. As a member of our Forces I saw Belsen at close range. I can never forget it. . . .

James Lawrence

Brookline, Massachusetts

Sir:

. . . I wish to thank you for that splendid article. . . . It is most timely. It breathes the spirit of courage which is so rare a thing in ecclesiastical circles. . . .

Edwin E. West

Oswego, Oregon

Sir:

. . . Our debt to Israel goes back to the very founding of our Faith. Should not the plight of Israel's sons and daughters move the hearts of Christians to sympathy and cooperation, rather than to bitter and venomous attack?

S. Ralph Harlow

Smith College

Northampton, Massachusetts

Sir:

. . . Americans are happy that the Jews have their homeland and thus the fulfillment of their dreams. To speak of this as hyphenating Jews is as absurd as to think of our Irish fellow-citizens as hyphenated because there is now a free Ireland.

. . . I was never in favor of partition. I was never much interested in a Jewish state. Since 1929, when I visited Palestine, I have held to the late Judah Magnes' idea of a bi-national country as shared by Jews and Arabs together. But fate, and bad politics, have decreed another outcome. Zion has been established. Wherefore would I seek peace and prosperity for Israel, and do all that my poor help may avail to secure these ends.

John Haynes Holmes

The Community Church of N. Y.

New York, New York

Sir:

Those who are concerned with the amelioration of anti-Semitism and with the improvement of Christian-Jewish relations will be profoundly disturbed over

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Henry Sloan Coffin's editorial, "Perils to America in the New Jewish State," in *Christianity and Crisis* for February 21.

We may grant that national policies are never determined by the spirit of love and that national self-interest is inescapable and partially required. But when a man bases his whole attitude toward the new state of Israel upon possible "perils to America" we may wonder if he is making the Christian gospel his point of departure. . . .

Many will join with Dr. Coffin in lamenting the recent manifestations of nationalism among Israeli devotees. They will also grant the possible international complications in the appearance of the new Jewish state. But if the reader will analyze Dr. Coffin's very first sentence he will note that the phrase, "resurgence of fanatical Jewish nationalism" is equated with the birth of the Jewish state. Thus the possible legitimacy

of such a state is ruled out *a priori*. One wonders if the worth of the American revolution is to be judged by the admitted fact that there were some unduly nationalistic elements involved in that event.

To equate Zionism with fanaticism is illogical but it also fails to look at the total picture. It fails to allow for the people in Zionist circles, both in America and in Israel, who are opposed to nationalistic fanaticism. . . .

I believe that Dr. Coffin also misunderstands the psychology of the anti-Semites. "No greater blunder could have been made by American Jewry than to espouse Zionism if it *wished to do away* with anti-Semitism in this country" (*italics mine*). Actually, the Jew can have little influence in alleviating Jew-hatred, any more than the Negro can do away with hatred of his people. The race problem in this country is one for Gentiles and whites to solve; those who are oppressed can accomplish little in the face of a hostile majority. Here, as elsewhere, the majority rules. It may be the case in specific instances that anti-Semitism has been increased by the presence of a Jewish state. But we must grasp the basic difference between the irrationality of race hatred, issuing in prejudice under every conceivable pretext, and the *occasions* race bias employs. For example, the same anti-Semite can now see a menace in the new Israeli state where a few years ago he was denouncing the Jews as foreigners who were trying to insinuate their influence and power into the American "way of life." No matter which way the Jew turns he is condemned. The appearance of Israel is not a fundamental cause of anti-Semitism. One may be inclined to wonder whether Dr. Coffin's careless use of terms like "fanatical" and "covetous" to describe the Jews will not do relatively as much harm as the fact of Israel. "Many of our Jewish fellow-citizens will gain for themselves the suspicion of being hyphenates." Perhaps so, but why is this accusation not made of Swedes and Italians? The fact seems to me to be that the rebirth of Israel is simply one more occasion for proclaiming the anti-Semitic gospel. . . .

A. Roy Eckardt.

Lawrence College,
Appleton, Wisconsin.

Sir:

. . . It is incomprehensible to me that anyone should write such a belligerent article. To me there is nothing comparable between the Irish situation and that of Israel. Of course there may be some fanatical individuals who get into the picture but those in places of leadership are anything but fanatics. . . .

Rev. Clark Walter Cummings.

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(We are sorry that the limit of space makes it impossible to publish all the letters received on this question.)

Author in This Issue:

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